

VZCZCXRO6154
OO RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0473/01 1501543
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 291543Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2960
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2008
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2129
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0671
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1406
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1764
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2185
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4616
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1269
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000473

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI, MAKONI DIVIDE ON VIOLENCE, ELECTIONS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Glenn Warren for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. On May 29, opposition presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai and former independent candidate Simba Makoni held separate briefings in which they discussed violence, the June 27 run-off election, and their perspectives on a government of national unity (GNU). Significant differences in their respective positions indicate that a united opposition will not be immediately achieved. Both deplored ongoing violence, but Tsvangirai laid the blame fully at the feet of ZANU-PF, while Makoni stated that both ZANU-PF and the MDC were to blame. Both men called for a government of national unity (GNU) to be convened as soon as possible, but Tsvangirai proposed a broad GNU under an MDC mandate, while Makoni suggested it be formed from all "key constituencies". While Tsvangirai focused on creating a benign electoral environment, Makoni stated outright that holding the contest would be disastrous for the Zimbabwean people and the country's fiscus; he advocated a two to five-year transitional government with elections to follow. END SUMMARY.

Tsvangirai's Diplomatic Briefing

12. (SBU) On May 29, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai held a briefing for the diplomatic corps to discuss the ongoing politically-motivated violence and the June 27 presidential run-off. Tsvangirai strongly condemned the Mugabe regime for perpetrating attacks against MDC supporters throughout the countryside, which were particularly prevalent in certain "no go areas akin to war zones," such as Mashonaland East and Central. Vigilante abductions and targeted killings of MDC organizers continued. Tsvangirai said he had attended the funeral of MDC Mashonaland East provincial secretary Shepherd Jani the previous day, who had been abducted, tortured, and killed by suspected Mugabe supporters; he understood that after he left mourners had been attacked by ZANU-PF thugs. He added that the MDC was compiling a list of "hit squad"

members that it planned to submit to the Attorney General for prosecution.

13. (SBU) Noting the militarization of rural areas, and bias and incompetence within the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Tsvangirai stated that "nothing resembling a free, fair and peaceful election" could take place in the current environment. SADC needed to send observers--they should have been here by now--and make the ZEC independent. Independent observers would not be sufficient, however, and Tsvangirai called for a peacekeeping force. He also renewed his call to the international community to act, including by providing additional funds for displaced victims. Finally, with regard to SADC, Tsvangirai said SADC needed an "end game" strategy in the event "ZANU-PF refused to recognize an MDC victory."

14. (SBU) Looking forward to "being" to be led by the MDC. Tsvangirai reported that he had urged South African President Thabo Mbeki and SADC to facilitate such a meeting, though that was "easier said than done." Noting the significance of the Zimbabwe crisis for the region, he called it "contagious" and observed that the xenophobic violence in South Africa was a symptom of tensions created by millions of Zimbabweans crossing the border and competing with South African residents for employment and resources. (COMMENT: While the MDC is preparing for the June 27 election, Tsvangirai believes formation of a GNU--with the MDC at its head--would be preferable to an election. END COMMENT.)

HARARE 00000473 002 OF 002

Makoni's Press Conference

15. (SBU) Makoni held a press conference and spoke at length about the suffering of victims of political violence. He bemoaned ongoing abductions, displacements, and deaths. Significantly, he stated that while the violence was "first attributable to ZANU-PF, lately it is more on the MDC side". This caused a stir among some members of the press corps who repeatedly pushed Makoni for examples of ZANU-PF victims of MDC violence. Makoni refused to answer, noting only that he did not "want to get caught up in labels when elections are the calm before the storm," Makoni referenced Kenya's violent post-election period and warned that, in Zimbabwe, the ongoing "violence bodes ill for a free and fair election." Makoni went on to state that "the last thing Zimbabweans need is another election; Zimbabwe cannot afford (in human terms or fiscally) another election." He therefore believed that the only way to end the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis was to establish a transitional national authority made up of all "key constituencies" including ZANU-PF, the MDC, and his "new dawn" movement. Such an authority would last two to five years and ultimately lead to elections.

17. (SBU) When asked hypothetically what position he would take in the event of a run-off election (assuming a GNU was not formed), Makoni said he would make his preference known before the election. He reiterated that his first priority remained "saving Zimbabweans from violence and that all national leaders should also be seized with it." Makoni confirmed that he had not met personally with either Tsvangirai or Mugabe since the March election, but that he had been "in communication" with both.

18. (SBU) Makoni called on both Tsvangirai and Mugabe to meet each other in order to chart a way forward for the country. He also said he continued to plan for his movement to become an official third party and that a steering committee to guide the process had been established.

19. (C) COMMENT. For some time, the Ambassador has urged Tsvangirai to meet with Makoni and discuss formation of a united opposition. We had received word that a meeting between the two was planned for early this week followed by a

joint press conference. This meeting never took place; Makoni informed the Ambassador on May 28 that he was still waiting for a call from Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai appears to have missed an important opportunity to unify the opposition with the result that Makoni decided to pursue an independent strategy.

¶10. COMMENT CONTINUED: Makoni's remarks (which were not received well by the press and diplomatic community) placing blame for violence equally on ZANU-PF and the MDC are regrettable and divorced from reality. They are certain to alienate Tsvangirai and make an alliance difficult. We believe that Makoni will ultimately support Tsvangirai in his electoral bid, but a joint press conference now condemning violence and pledging unity in the election might have served to stem the violence by showing widespread opposition to it, and provided an important psychological boost to the MDC and its supporters. END COMMENT.
Warren